

schools across the country. Tight job markets have often added to the necessity of a broadened job search, but also our nation has become more mobile. National competition for teaching jobs can have very positive results in our classrooms, but at the same time, the records prove that we must increase the security of our schools, through criminal background checks on applicants about whom we know very little. In Nebraska today any school district may do a criminal background check on a Nebraska resident applying for a job, but we are currently blocked from doing a background check on nonresidents. In order to check nonresidents, we must access the FBI files, and to do that we must have a fingerprint. LB 754 gives the state the authority to require fingerprints for all nonresident applicants who are seeking a certificate, teaching or administrative. The check is estimated to take about three weeks. We have had this bill before us before, but LB 754 is the legislation that has been agreed upon by the State Department of Education, the Nebraska Association of School Boards, the National Council of School Administrators, Omaha Public Schools, the Nebraska State Education Association, and the PTA organization who have worked very hard on...with their input on the bill. This is the most practical solution to an identified problem. The committee amendment, as I said, replaces the original sections. The amendment requires applicants from other states who are applying for teaching or administrative certificates to file a complete set of fingerprints with the commissioner of education or the State Patrol. An applicant from another state is defined as anyone who has been a resident of Nebraska for less than five years. After the commissioner or the State Patrol receives the fingerprints, the State Patrol will search for criminal history information and transmit the fingerprints to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for a national check. The applicant will pay a fee set by the State Board of Education to cover the actual direct and indirect costs. It is estimated to be about \$35. The commissioner may deny issuance of a certificate to any applicant convicted of a felony or a misdemeanor involving abuse, neglect or sexual misconduct. In reviewing a conviction the commissioner of education shall take into consideration information submitted by the applicant regarding the facts and circumstances surrounding a conviction, the type of offense and sentence, the date of the offense, the applicant's age at the time of the offense, and the applicant's conduct and positive social contributions since the offense. The criminal history shall remain confidential and may be released only upon written